

Bedford Duxford MWC Water Browser

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Bedford MWC Water Bowser

British water bowser used during the Second World War by the Army and the Royal Air Force.

The provision of adequate fresh water supplies was vital to military forces during the Second World War. For example, it was needed for drinking, catering, bathing, medical facilities, vehicle radiators and fire-fighting. Once a supply of water had been secured it was tested, purified as necessary, and distributed by vehicles such as this bowser. They carried tanks varying in capacity from 200 to 450 gallons (909 to 2,046 litres).

Bedford MWCs were used by the British Army – normally one per battalion. They were commonly known as ‘Unit Water Carts’. In Royal Air Force service, MWCs delivered water to parts of airfields which lacked mains connections. They were also used to ‘damp down’ dusty airstrips, and to maintain a water reserve in case the normal supply was disrupted.

This 200 gallon (909 litre) bowser, fitted with a sprayer bar at the back, came to Duxford in 1984 on loan from a private vehicle collector, and was purchased by the Imperial War Museum in 2001. It is a very rare type of MWC because the bowser section is from a Morris CS8 Commercial, mounted on a standard Bedford utility chassis. It is painted with the markings of No. 122 Squadron, No. 83 Group, 2nd Tactical Air Force in 1944.



A 1st Army Bedford MWC Bowser being refilled at a water station in Tunisia, North Africa, 1944. © IWM 2001

Engine: Bedford 6-cylinder, 72 hp	Width: 1.96 m (6 ft 6 in) Height: 2.08 m (6 ft 10 in)	Tank Capacity: 909 litres (200 gallons), later 1,046 litres (230 gallons)
Dimensions: Length: 4.65 m (15 ft 3 in)	Weight: 2,502 kg (2 tons 9¼ cwt)	



British Army Bedford MWC Bowser being refilled at a water station in Tunisia, North Africa, 1944. IWM NA 1444

Engine:

Width: 1.98 m (6 ft 6 in)

Tank Capacity:













